



## TOM O'HALLERAN

1ST DISTRICT, ARIZONA

July 19, 2022

The Honorable Alejandro Mayorkas  
Secretary  
United States Department of Homeland Security  
3801 Nebraska Ave NW  
Washington, D.C. 20016

Dear Secretary Mayorkas,

In May, I visited the Nogales Port of Entry on the southern border in Arizona. It was clear that there was confusion regarding the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's (DHS) seemingly conflicting instructions and overlapping jurisdictions. Multiple federal agencies under DHS, including Customs and Border Protection (CBP) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), were involved in operations at the border, but there was uncertainty among agents on the ground regarding the mission and roles of the different entities. Even worse, the memorandum released by DHS on April 26, 2022<sup>1</sup> was woefully short on details and DHS has been slow to share additional information since that time, including specifics on how the agency is prepared to handle the ongoing influx of migrants at our southern border.

The FY2023 President's Budget Request made substantial investments in the Department of Homeland Security, with a particular focus on securing our southern border. The President's request includes \$15.26 billion in discretionary spending for Customs and Border Protection<sup>2</sup>, an increase from Fiscal Year 2022. Importantly, it is worth highlighting a \$1 billion investment in effective and modern port and border security. This includes:

- \$104.8 million for Border Patrol Agent hiring, training, and resiliency, supporting the hiring of an additional 300 agents.
- \$63.2 million for a Border Enforcement Coordination Network (BECN).
- \$13.5 million for Integrated Surveillance Towers (IST).
- \$145.4 million to increase funding for design and construction of two Border Patrol Stations, Air and Marine Operations (AMO) facilities, a Trade and Cargo Academy, and facilities to house Office of Professional Responsibility agents requested in the FY 2022 budget.

---

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/2022-04/22\\_0426\\_dhs-plan-southwest-border-security-preparedness.pdf](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/2022-04/22_0426_dhs-plan-southwest-border-security-preparedness.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> [https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/2022-03/22-%201835%20-%20FY%202023%20Budget%20in%20Brief%20FINAL%20with%20Cover\\_Remediated.pdf](https://www.dhs.gov/sites/default/files/2022-03/22-%201835%20-%20FY%202023%20Budget%20in%20Brief%20FINAL%20with%20Cover_Remediated.pdf)

The President's Budget Request also takes significant steps to address the humanitarian crisis at the southern border and to improve transparency and accountability. This includes:

- \$129.5 million to fund medical services at the border, including hiring an additional 12 full time employees.
- \$26 million to provide funding to the Unified Immigration Portal, to update the program's core technology. It also provides funding to reduce the number of CBP agents and officers required for securing and transporting detainees, which allows CBP agents and officers to focus on critical frontline law enforcement operations.
- \$23 million to hire an additional 300 Border Patrol Processing Coordinators.
- \$30 million for the Alternatives to Detention Case Management Program, to be managed by FEMA and overseen by CRCL.

While this increase in funding is important, I have concerns that the Department of Homeland Security remains unprepared for the continued increase in migrants seeking asylum on America's southern border. This continues to place a significant strain on border communities, like many of those found in Arizona. I am requesting a briefing to answer several questions that remain after a review of the budget. Specifically, I respectfully request that the following questions be addressed:

- How many additional border patrol agents are needed to be hired by CBP to handle the continued surge in migrants while still protecting our border?
- How will CBP hire these additional agents, while also retaining and continuing to train their existing workforce?
- How will CBP spend the additional requested funding for border technology, fencing, and structures to stem the flow of migrants at areas other than ports of entry?
- How does the President's Budget Request address the continued flow of contraband, like fentanyl, from flowing across the southern border?
- How is the Department coordinating with border communities and states to ensure that they receive the support they need from the federal government?
- How is DHS improving processing times for those seeking asylum?
- How do the President's Budget Request and executive actions clarify the role of different agencies involved at our southern border, including FEMA?
- What measures are being put in place to ensure that CBP can address the humanitarian crisis at the southern border, including what arrangements are being addressed with local NGOs to ensure that they have the capacity to handle the increase in migrants?
- How many and what type of additional facilities are scheduled to be built or put in place?

The House is expected to consider the Homeland Security Appropriations package as soon as this month and it is critical that CBP is properly resourced to deal with the continued surge in migrants seeking asylum. It is critical that DHS improves communication with border communities, border

states, and Congress, as the flow of migrants shows no signs of abating. I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Tom O'Halleran". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Tom O'Halleran  
Member of Congress